

The preliminary proceedings were yet going on when another energetic member of the Precursor society pushed his way into the crowded room to announce that arrangements had been made with a view to ensure the recovery of Mr. O'Connell's watch. "I feel persuaded," he said, "that every gentleman here will willingly consent to be searched before leaving, and," he added very emphatically, and to all appearances very cogently, "as no one has been allowed to go away, the thief must be in the room."

An uncomfortable sense pervaded the apartment that this remark, however true, was by no means complimentary to us collectively.

In the midst of the general discomfort, O'Connell, with a roguish twinkle of his Hibernian eye, was heard saying, as if again talking to himself: "Oh! the best thing the thief can do is to steal away."

Every eye in the room answered to that twinkle of fun, and, instead of the glum silence of a moment before, there was an instant roar of laughter.

After this the proceedings of the day's meeting began in earnest. O'Connell's speech was recognizable, by those qualified to pronounce such an opinion, as among the finest orations he ever delivered. Save that it was uttered within doors, and to a more restricted audience, though one very considerable, intensely congenial, and in many ways important, it exactly answered that noble description in St. Stephen's of O'Connell addressing one of his monster demonstrations:

Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
Wall'd by wide air, and roof'd by boundless heaven;
Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
And wave on wave flowed into space away.
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
Even to the centre of the hosts around;
And, as I thought, rose the sonorous swell,
As from some church tower swings the silvery bell,
Aloft and clear from airy tide to tide,
It glided easy, as a bird might glide;
To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
It play'd with each wild passion as it went,
Now stirr'd the uproar, now the murmur still'd,
And sobb'd or laughter answer'd as it will'd.

I saw my-elf the emotions thus awakened, often in startling rapid alternations. Tears glittered in the eyes of many at one time, and but a few seconds afterward there would be a roar of merriment. If, as Mr. Disraeli has said, Sir Robert Peel played upon the House of Commons like an old fiddle, O'Connell played upon a nobler instrument—an Irish harp strung with the people's heart-strings.

In one of the earlier portions of his harangue, while his hearers were hanging with breathless interest upon his accents, a disturbance at the doorway, as of some person endeavoring to force an entrance into the apartment, caused a general cry of "Order! order!" The disturbance, however, to the indignation of all, increased instead of diminishing, and an inspector of police, forcing his way into the hall, stepped on to the further end of the long table, and picking his way among the inkstands, pens, and blotting paper, advanced the whole length of the room towards O'Connell, carrying conspicuously in his hand the gold watch and chain of the Liberator.

A shout of delight from all present was hushed into silence as the policeman handed the watch, with some inaudible remark, to its owner.

"What?" said O'Connell, not having caught the inspector's words quite accurately.

Inspector of police—"It was found, sir, after you had left home, under your pillow, in your bedroom!"

O'Connell's merriest touch of humor was never greeted by heartier peals of laughter than the few simple words uttered by that policeman.

"Ah! Liberator darling, sure nobody would rob you," cried one of the frieze-clad tatterdemalions of the gutter, when the meeting was over and O'Connell was driving away in his carriage.

At the close of the speech thus oddly interrupted, I recall to mind the sense of bewilderment with which I listened to the last words of the sonorous and impassioned peroration—a bewilderment awakened by the fantastic evidence the orator afforded in the manner of its utterance that he preserved the serenest mastery over himself and his theme, even when apparently most completely carried away by the influence of the *astrum*, or divine afflatus. As the last words of the ornate and balanced sentences forming the close of his peroration passed his lips, O'Connell, in the act of sitting down in the midst of a prolonged burst of cheering, spread open a silk handkerchief he carried in his hands, and with it playfully enveloped the head and shoulders of a little child beside him—one of the children of "My Dear Ray," the secretary—doing this with such *aplomb* that the whole speech might almost have seemed contrived as a cunning preparation for the climax of a game of boo-peep.—'St. James' Magazine.'

RATTLESNAKES.—The rattlesnake finds a superior foe in the deer and black snake. Whenever a buck discovers a rattlesnake in a situation which invites attack, he loses no time in preparing for battle. He makes up within ten or twelve feet of the snake, then leaps forward and aims to sever the body of the snake with his bifurcated hoofs. The first onset is most commonly successful, but if otherwise, the buck repeats the trial until he cuts the snake in twain. The black snake is also more than an equal competitor against the rattlesnake. Such is its celerity, both in running and entwining itself around its victim, that the rattlesnake has no way of escaping from its fatal embrace. When the black and rattlesnakes are about to meet for battle, the former darts forward at the height of his speed, and strikes at the back of the neck of the latter with unerring certainty, leaving a foot or two of the upper part of the body at liberty. In an instant he encircles him within five or six folds; he then stops and looks the strangled foe in the face, to ascertain the effect produced upon his corseted body. If he shows signs of life, the coils are multiplied, and the screws tightened, the operator all the time watching the countenance of the victim. Thus the two remain thirty or forty minutes; the executioner then slackens one coil, noticing at the same time whether any signs of life appear; if so, the coil is resumed and retained until the incarcerated wretch is completely dead. The moccasin-snake is killed the same way.

WHOLE CITIES SWALLOWED BY EARTHQUAKE.

CORRESPONDENCE from Maracaibo, dated May 29, describes the awful earthquake which destroyed several cities and thousands of lives. The following details are furnished by one of the survivors:

San Jose de Cucuta had for many years made very rapid progress, increasing in wealth and population, until it had become one of the most important cities of Columbia. Of late years new and important enterprises had been started, necessitating the construction of new buildings for mercantile and other purposes, and of a large number of fine residences. In a moment of time these have all been destroyed. It was situated on the boundary of the Republic, and was founded by Juan de Martin in 1534. It was a port of entry, if an inland town can be called a port, and here was the established Custom-house. The population of the city at the time of the disaster is estimated at about 12,000. It had a large commercial business, and was the great depot for coffee and cacao for shipment either through the Venezuelan port or down the Magdalena. At half-past five o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, May 16, a strong shock was observable, lasting twenty seconds. A little later another trembling of the earth took place, which gradually died away through the space of five minutes. At a quarter past six the same day the entire population was brought to its feet by a strong shock, which lasted for some time. During the 17th and the following night occasional tremblings were experienced. On the morning of the 18th everything was serene, and the day advanced without anything new, with no premonitions of the awful fate which awaited the doomed city.

The hour of half-past 11 arrived. A great part of the citizens were at table. The earth commenced shaking with great force, and from all sides the people rushed into the streets with despairing cries for mercy. For fifteen seconds the movement continued, the city moving like a great ship without ballast. Instantaneously a cloud of fine dust enshrouded the streets and houses, impeding the vision and calling forth renewed cries of horror and appeals for mercy from the populace. These were of short duration, however, as the dust soon became so thick as to impede respiration, and, as if by the touch of an enchanter's wand, an awful silence succeeded.

Many who might have been saved from the ruins of the falling buildings fell victims to suffocation. Not longer than two minutes did this terrible situation continue. A wind rapidly carried away the dust cloud, revealing the terrible scene.

What was a few minutes before a beautiful city, instinct with life and happiness, was now the hideous tomb of thousands. The ruin was complete. A contemplation of the few who survived the awful disaster was even more terrible than the sight of the ruins and the dead which lay beneath them. Crazed with horror, men, women and children ran about crying for help and to their friends who lay dead near at hand. Here a mother frantically called to her child; there the child, horribly disfigured, perhaps, wailed out for its parent. Husbands, wives, sons, daughters, fathers and mothers, were running about in wild dismay. Some hours passed before quiet was restored and a realization of the event obtained. The trembling of the earth continued, and to add to the horrors of the situation, fires broke out in various localities amid the ruins. The so fearful day was followed by a still more horrible night. The survivors had moved to the suburbs of the city, where encampments were established. The rain commenced to fall in torrents, and amid the impenetrable darkness the groans of the wounded filled the air, varied only by the sharp detonations proceeding from explosive materials amid the ruins. The coming of a new day showed that not more than 2000 remained alive. Beneath the fallen houses lay from 8000 to 10,000 dead.

Immediately the sad news reached here a subscription was raised by the merchants in money and clothing, which was liberally responded to by all; and the United States Consul, as agent of the Atlas Steamship Company and the Grinoco Navigation Company, having tendered the use of the steamers Pico and Urihante, they were that same evening despatched with an ample supply of provisions, clothing and medicines, under the care of a committee to dispense them, and a number of able physicians to administer to the wounded and sick. The Governor of this State also nobly responded to the call for aid in money and provisions, and furthermore sent a picket of soldiers for the protection of the emigrants coming from Cucuta.

Reports from other localities furnish news of equal destruction. San Cavetano was destroyed; also the larger part of Santiago. In Gramalote there was great destruction. Arboleda, Cucutilla and San Cristobal are all nearly destroyed, principally the four last. The population of these towns is estimated by a person well acquainted in that region to be more or less as follows:—

San Cayetano	...	...	...	...	...	4000
Santiago	...	...	...	...	...	2000
Gramalote	...	...	...	...	...	3000
Arboleda	...	...	...	...	...	5000
Cucutilla	...	...	...	...	...	5000
San Cristobal	...	...	...	...	...	1600

The section of country above referred to embraces the regions about where Colombia and Venezuela join, the Colombian portion embracing the State of Santander. It is in some respects the most productive part of the republic, and the coffee of this section is familiar to all the world. The shock was felt sharply of Bogota and adjoining sections. A gentleman who was at the time in Pacatativa says that the movement lasted for three quarters of a minute. It was also strongly felt in Barranquilla. Maracaibo, though removed a degree and a half from the scene, yet felt at the same moment a gentle but long-continued undulation of the ground, and not a day has passed since the memorable 18th May that we have not here felt shocks more or less strong.